



## Litlington Scrapbook 1897-1990

Facts, Features and (occasional) Fallacies reported  
in Cambridge Newspaper.

Compiled by  
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### Introduction

Each evening between March 1997 and March 2015 I compiled a 'Looking Back' column in the Cambridge News in which I featured snippets from issues of 100, 75, 50 and 25 years ago. I particularly sought out unusual items relating to villages and areas of Cambridge not usually featured

The stories are now available for you to read, search and download from the Internet Archive website, <https://archive.org/details/CambridgeshireScrapbook2018Revision>

These are the stories relating to Litlington

This index was produced as a working part of my personal research resources and would benefit by editing. If you can make any of it work for you I am delighted. But remember you should always check everything!

The newspapers are held in the Cambridgeshire Collection at Cambridge Lion Yard Library together with other Cambridge titles back to 1762. They have a variety of indexes including a record of stories for every village in Cambridgeshire between 1770 and 1900 and newspaper cuttings files on 750 topics from 1958 to date.

Please make what use of it you may. Please remember who it came from

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1898 01 04

Litlington church assault, p3

1899 07 24

An action was brought by Thomas Barlow, baker of Litlington to recover £9 from a Bassingbourn butcher in respect of a breach of warranty in a horse dealing transaction. Defendant had told him the mare was quiet to ride and drive, but that on putting her in the trap she was a little bit "swishy". He drove the mare to Royston, and on starting from Joe Coote's shop it began to kick. On the way home it had two other turns of kicking. On the following morning he took two hours in attempting to get the mare into the cart, then gave it up for a bad job

### **1900**

1902 05 19

A young man in charge of a horse attached to a cart left it unattached in the station yard at Ashwell while he took a parcel to the booking office. The horse became restive, dashed off into the goods yard and crossed the sidings to the main line, following closely in the wake of the 7.39 down train. The runaway continued on its career till it reached the Litlington gate level crossing where in endeavouring to cross the line it fell. It was at length secured and seemed none the worse for its gallop.

1906 06 30

Fourteen public houses have been closed under the Licensing Act of 1904. They include a beer house at Heath Road Litlington which sold one barrel a week, including stout, and a gallon of ginger wine. All their beer was made from pure malt and hops and it was a better house than the two nearest to it. There were four fully-licensed houses, four beer houses and one off-licence in the village. 06 06 30d,e, f

1906 11 16

The Compensation Authority considered claims for premises closed under the Licensing Act. Potton Brewery said they would lose £275 if the licence of a beerhouse at Heath Road, Litlington was taken away but accepted £240 as compensation. 06 11 16a & b

1908 07 31

Twenty-six licensed houses are to close, magistrates decided. They include the Robin Hood at Litlington. CWN 08 07 31

### **1910**

1912 02 16

Beehive beerhouse Litlington, Oak beerhouse Melbourn and Hill House beerhouse Steeple Morden closed

1913 01 03

A police constable stated he was on duty in Litlington when he saw Benjamin Whitney in charge of a hawkers van on the highway. He said 'Your name is Noah Bacon isn't it?' The man replied 'No, I don't know him'. The Constable told him he had the name Noah Bacon on his van the day before, when he was at Steeple Morden. He looked around the van to see what the name was, but could not find one. Defendant said the horse must have rubbed it off, there being two loose horses at the side, and asked him to chalk his name on. The policeman asked him what it was and he said 'Benjamin Whitney'. He told him to get it painted on. When he saw him Fowlmere the following day and there was no name on. The man was fined twenty shillings

1913 04 04

Cambridgeshire Congregational Union is doing well in the Royston District. The United Membership of the four small churches is 75 and in the Sunday schools there are 105 children with 12 teachers. Litlington has not been doing as well as it might, but the situation has distinctly improved and the prospect is brightening.

1913 08 15

Litlington fire

A fire broke out in the bakery of Mr. C Ingrey of Litlington. At about 8.30 He was just about to 'set in' when he noticed flames coming from the window of a disused loft over the oven. A flue passes through this loft and it is supposed that the fire started in this. He gave the alarm and help as well soon on the spot, but all attempts to extinguish the fire failed. The Royston fire brigade received the alarm and within half an hour, they were on the scene. The Bake House and the stables and cart shed adjoining were buildings of lath and plaster with tiled roofs. By the time the brigade arrived the roof of the bakery had fallen in. Mr. Ingrey's dwelling house which is quite close to the bake house was at one time in danger of catching fire and some of the furniture was moved out into the yard. The water was first pumped from a tank from 20 to 30 feet deep, but this was soon emptied and the engine was removed to a pond some distance away. Mr. Ingrey was able to remove his dough which he said was not very fast this morning, to the premises of another Baker. But several sacks of flour, which were in the loft were destroyed. The buildings which were fully insured were entirely destroyed?

1913 09 26

A naval monoplane bound for the army and manoeuvres descended near the Litlington footpath and after a stay of about 15 minutes started off again, traveling in a northerly direction. Several aeroplanes were seen in the neighbourhood doing the last week.

1914 03 06

Litlington archaeology – Roman remains – 14 03 06

1914 03 27

The court heard that men employed by the Cambridge Antiquarian Society on excavating Roman remains at Litlington had gone on strike for more money. But one had kept on working. When he left his house a man who'd been crouching under the wall struck him in the face. Other men used obscene language for half an hour. They issued threats as to what they would do to him and would put his tools down the well. The judge said if men did not want to work they need not do so. But they should not interfere with others who were working. 14 03 27a

1914 05 29

Death of Well-known Farmer. Mr. James Russell, late of Road Farm, Wendy, passed away suddenly on Thursday last at his residence, St. Swithin, Royston. Mr. Russell was born at Road Farm, Wendy, 80 years ago, the farm having been in the hands of the Russell family since the year 1700, when his grandfather migrated there from Litlington. Owing to age and failing health, Mr. Russell retired seven years ago, and went to live at Royston. 14 05 29 CIPof

1914 10 30

Enlistment Hardwick, Histon, Oakington, Litlington, Guilden Morden,

1918 08 28

Litlington fire destroys three cottages, Royston Road – 18 08 28a

**1920**

## **1930**

1934 04 11

Mr H.R. Maunders, the lay reader at Litlington, reports that he was returning from a vestry meeting at Abington Pigotts when he was amazed to see by the light of his cycle lamp, a young woman standing a few yards from him. She was wearing a costume of 100 years ago and he eyes pierced the night like balls of fire. Mr E. Hallybone, the well-known dirt-track rider from Royston, says he had stopped one night with magneto trouble when he saw something white coming towards him and ran. But the vicar says it is a large white owl and he sees it every night. 34 04 11

1936 11 05

The Air Ministry propose to construct a RAF station at Bassingbourn and approached South Cambs RDC about the possibility of obtaining a supply of 15,000 gallons of water a day. This could be obtained from Croydon Hill at a cost of 10d per 1,000 gallons. The scheme would take 20 months to implement and would also serve nearby parishes. But did any of the parishes want piped water? It would mean a rate of over four shillings for Litlington, Shingay and Wendy and there had been too much money spent on water already, all of which was money wasted. 36 11 05c & d

## **1940**

1949 06 29

A tender of £34,887 was accepted by the County Education Committee for the erection of the first instalment of a new school at Girton. At Litlington a building on the RAF site is to be adapted as a classroom and offices for 30 children.

## **1950**

1954 07 07

South Cambs RDC proposed a development which would change the face of the old-world village of Litlington. They want to develop a nine-acre ex RAF Communal Site as a permanent housing site and replace hutments which are classed as sub-standard accommodation by 50 non-traditional homes, mainly to rehouse the 'squatters'. The site is an eyesore but it has sewers, water pipes and foundations. Building would be fast and easy and the houses would be finished in about six months. But it is outside the village area, there were alternative sites and the land was needed for smallholders after clearance. It would destroy the character of the village and clash with the landscape. – 54 07 07

## **1960**

1960 11 11

In January 1960 the Cambridge Independent Press started a series of articles about Cambridgeshire villages with an aim to recall some of the history and to indicate modern trends. Litlington was featured on 11th November 1960

The reporter commented:

Cradled in a very ordinary portion of south west Cambridgeshire and rather lacking the strong historical interests of its near neighbours, Litlington seems to have been bypassed by the world at large. It is a quiet village that has pursued its own methodical way through the ages, untouched by fame and untroubled by large events

Somewhat 'higgledy-piggledy' in its layout it has around 70 council houses, over about 80% of them being attractive post-war types and quite a number of private residences that have been built in recent years.

Steeple Morden airfield was built during the War and suitable areas tacked on to Bassingbourn air drone and Litlington was inundated with all these extensions. Clearance work has gone on over the past 15 years but derelict sites remain in and around the village.

Not that they are all useless. One building has served very well as a village hall. Another has been neatly we constructed to provide a temporary junior school. Re-housing has reduced the number of squatters, but some people still live at the W.A.A.F. site

The churchyard has been neatly levelled off in recent years not the fact that local farmers lent equipment and that all sorts of people helped in the work is an example of the way Litlington goes about things - undemonstrative, practical cooperation is there when it is needed.

The same thing happened when major repairs to the church tower were needed 10 years ago: the village raised £3,000 and the work was done. It has been recently redecorated inside and has a neat and sound appearance. The Congregational Church continues to enjoy strong support and has a good Sunday school

On the green in the centre of the village stands the lock-up or cage. Not so many of these solid solitary cells remains and this one has been preserved - though the village pump which stood beside it has gone Further to the south is another green and in the adjoining Seven Stars meadow fairs were held until about two years ago

1965 05 14

A Cambridge electronic engineer says his research work into colour television has been set back by six months after highly secret plans were stolen. A specialist gang got into the Golden Rule Laboratory at a converted public house, the Seven Stars in Litlington, and went straight for the files. They also took another device to enable the blind to see electronically. Edward Jaggers has warned his agents in Paris and Geneva about the raid. 65 05 14

1966 01 01

A Playle opens abattoir extension at Litlington – 66 01 01b

## **1970**

1976 11 20

Litlington primary school, housed in wartime Nissen huts, is so damp that children and staff are running the risk of electric shocks if water penetrates the wiring system. A scathing report produced by the PTA claims that the children are probably sitting on diluted urine-soaked floors to change their shoes because the changing area is a continuation of the lavatory floors. The huts have been classified as temporary since 1950. "Not far from the school pigs are being housed in an identical building", it says. At present there are 82 children at the school which is bleak and unfriendly and away from new housing developments.

1977 06 03

Ashwell Street is no walk for the timorous. It needs nerves of steel to pass dogs barking and straining at the leash as the lane wends its seven miles between Ashwell and Melbourn. It is always hitting the headlines with stories of its squatters' rights problems, damage to neighbouring property at Litlington and litter, particularly at the Ashwell End. It is easy to understand why this is one of the more "unknown" green lane rambles. Maybe it's not risking life and limb, but it comes darned close to it – David Waterson

## **1980**

1980 04 02

Litlington school, p1

1980 07 11

A 300-year-old dovecote at Bury Farm, Litlington, is to be demolished because of its poor structural state. It is owned by Cambridgeshire County Council who have been criticised for allowing the brick and clay slate listed building to deteriorate. Even some county councillors say it is disgraceful that an authority with responsibility for maintaining ancient buildings should have allowed one of its own properties to fall down. But it would be too costly for the hard-up council to restore 80 07 11b

1983 08 12

Ben the Bus, the friend of shoppers in the Royston area for 15 years, has become the latest victim of the economic climate. The single-decker Leyland, operated by Ben Martin of Litlington Post Office, will no longer be selling groceries because the piston of the engine is broken. It was in February 1968 he started delivering to local villages, later concentrating on Royston housing estates. His trade has also been hit by a new shop in Burns Road and the cost of keeping the 52-seater on the road. 83 08 12 p14

1984 05 02

A sad hulk of a building stands empty and overgrown on the edge of Litlington. A few faded pictures on the wall provide the reminder that this used to be the village school. With the windows and doors broken the wind whistles through. Since it closed in 1981 the children have been bussed to Steeple Morden. The closure has left an open wound in the village and the whole story is a sorry saga of bureaucratic bungling. It began in 1950 when the school moved from its old home in the centre of the village to 'temporary' accommodation in former war-time Air Force huts while the old building was repaired. For reasons nobody really knows they never moved back. 84 05 02 p16

1985 05 09

Every parish in south Cambridgeshire could have its own nature reserve. A start has been made with the church at East Hatley which is kept locked though nesting boxes for birds and bats have been installed and damaged windows allow entry to many winged colonisers. Other sites include Caxton stone pit, Litlington chalk pit and the former sewage works at Comberton now known as Watts' Wood. None has plants or wildlife of great rarity but they are oases in the desert of arable farming and the last surviving habitats for animals which were once very common. 85 05 09b

1989 04 29

Litlington has been rocked by shock news that its abattoir will close with the loss of 70 jobs. It is the biggest slaughterhouse in the area and many workers live locally, some have not had any other job since leaving school. Owner Cliff Playle, whose grandfather had a butcher's shop in Bassingbourn, blames fierce competition from imported European meat and now they face big costs to bring it up to EEC standards. The company is also a wholesaler and prepares meat for big High Street names such as Tesco and Sainsbury 89 04 29